VERTIGO
issue 32 Feb 05
BILL WILLINGHAM
MARK BUCKINGHAM
STEVE LEIALOHA
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
vertigocomics.com
FABLES™

The HOME LANDS
MASTER!
MASTER!
COME QUICK!
OH BOY! OH BOY! OH BOY!
MASTER!
YOU NEED TO SEE THIS!
MISTRAL, WHY ARE YOU FLYING ABOUT LIKE SOME UNCIVILIZED GUST?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE BASIC COURTESY OF MY HOME?
SORRY, MASTER. I GOT OVEREXCITED BY WHAT I SAW IN THE SCRYING POOL.
AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?
A WONDROUS THING! I FOUND YOUR SON!
WELL, NOT YOUR SON EXACTLY, BUT--
OH, YOU SHOULD JUST COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!

CONVERSION BY WILDSTORM

COME ON, PEOPLE!
YOU CAN'T *DO* THIS!
BUT PRINCE CHARMING *BROKE* HIS PROMISES, MR. BEAST!
ALL OF THEM!
WHERE'S THE FREE *GLAMOUR* SPELLS AND *TRANSFORMATIONS*?
NOT SO CHARMING NOW!
wake ME!
KEEP YOUR PROMISES!
FINE! I AGREE YOU HAVE A *RIGHT* TO COMPLAIN!
BUT *NOT* OUT IN THE STREETS, WHERE THE *MUNDYS* MIGHT SEE YOU!
PC OUT!
WE delivered the VOTES, now you deliver the SPELLS!
Someday my PRINCE will GO!!!
NOD'S BOOKS
LEWIS
NO 20
FORD

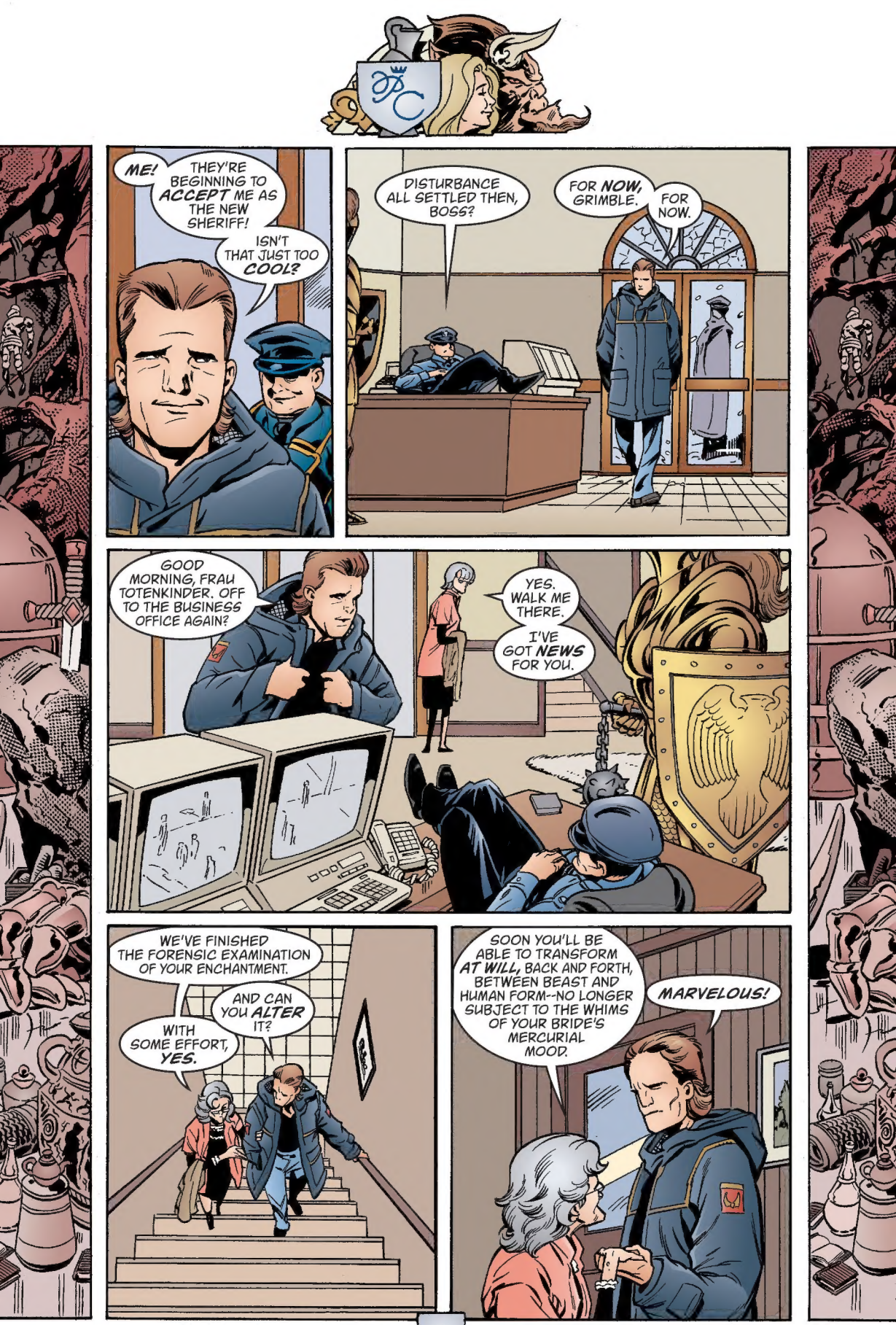
THE DARK, KILLING WINTER

In which protests occur, magical doings are arranged, someone dies, investigations proceed, and an unexpected visitor arrives at The Farm.

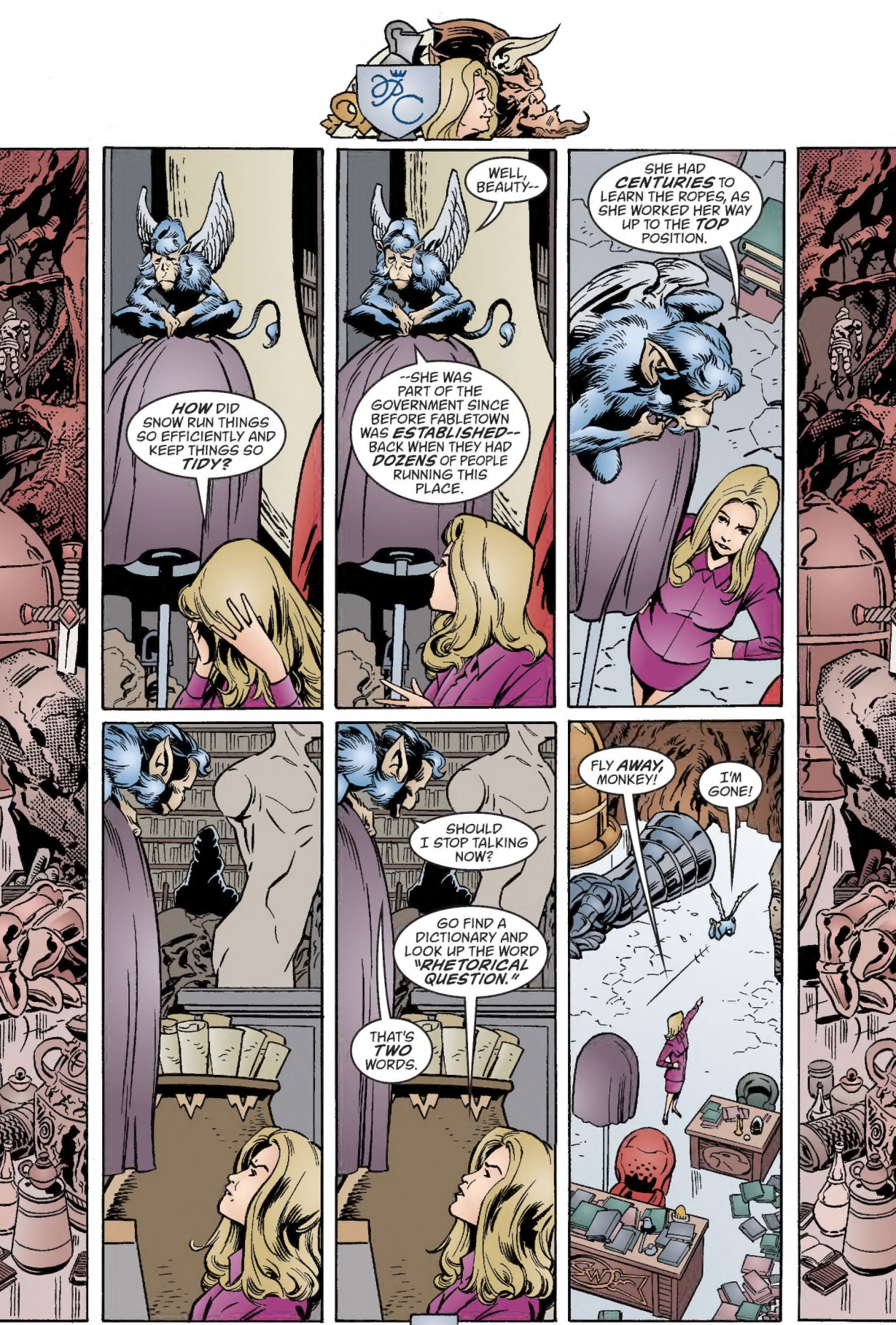
Written & Created by Bill Willingham
Pencilled by Mark Buckingham
Inked by Steve Leialoha
Lettered by Todd Klein
Colored by Daniel Vozzo
Cover Art by James Jean
Assistant Editor: Mariah Huehner
Editor: Shelly Bond

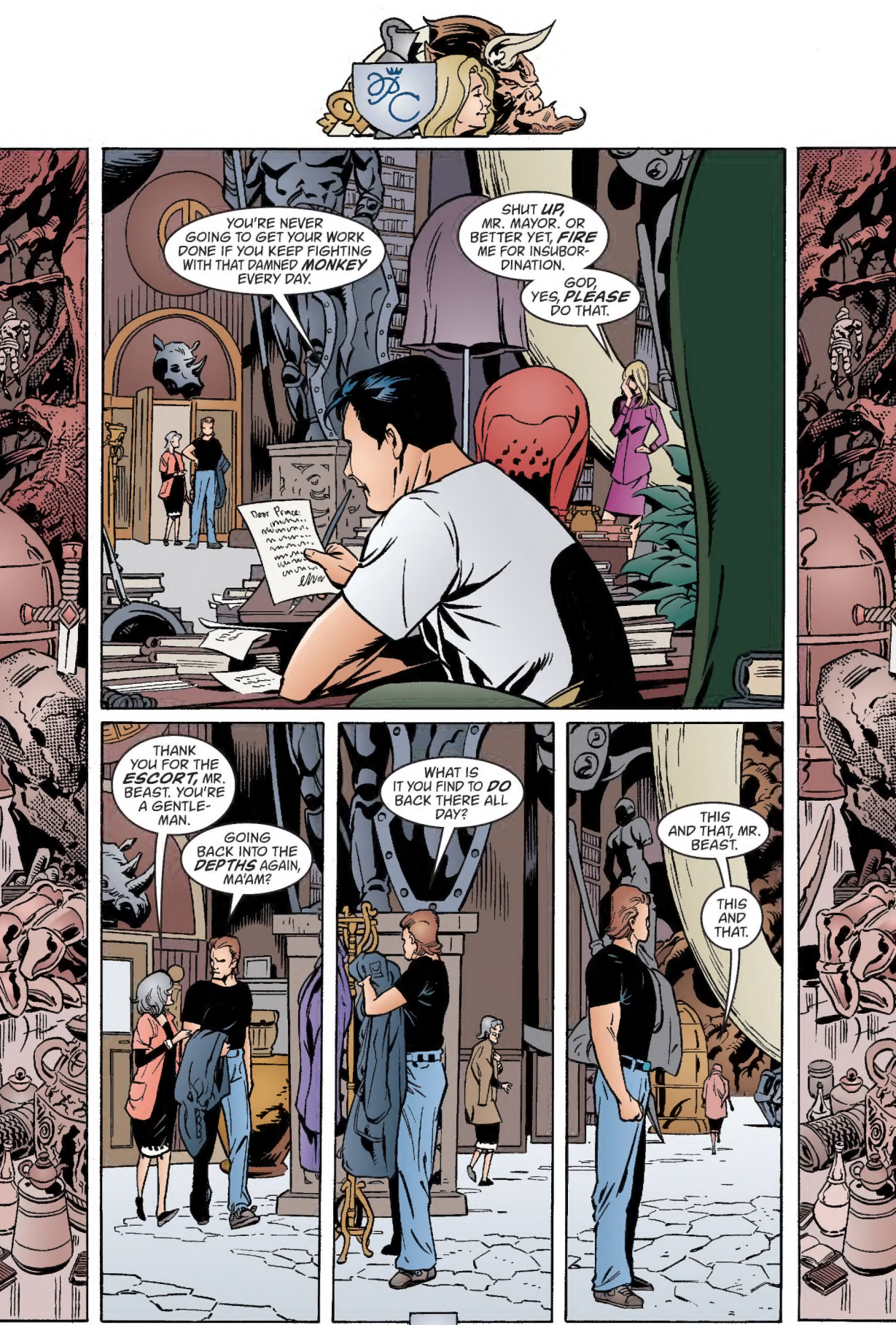
OUR LAWS EXPRESSLY *FORBID* ANY PUBLIC ACTION THAT MIGHT DRAW MUNDY ATTENTION TO OUR TRUE NATURE.
YOU *KNOW* THIS!
WHAT WE *KNOW* IS THAT THE NEW MAYOR--MISTER *HIGH AND MIGHTY* HIMSELF--CAN'T BE *BOTHERED* TO SEE US!
HE'S *REFUSED* OUR ATTEMPTS TO SCHEDULE *APPOINTMENTS!*
GIVE US THE SPELLS!
A LIAR!
THAT'S *NOT* BECAUSE HE'S UNWILLING TO *SEE* CITIZENS.
IT'S ONLY BECAUSE BOY BLUE IS *MISSING* AND THERE'S NO ONE HERE TO *MAKE* THE APPOINTMENTS!
BLUE *KNEW* HOW TO RUN THE BUSINESS OFFICE AND I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT THE NEW REGIME IS A BIT *LOST* WITHOUT HIM.
THINGS ARE CHAOTIC NOW, BUT THEY'LL GET *BETTER.*
WE'RE JUST HAVING A ROUGH *TRANSITION,* IS ALL.
WELL, YOU BETTER TRANSITION *FASTER,* BECAUSE *WE* AREN'T THE ONES *MOST* AFFECTED BY YOUR BOSS'S BROKEN PROMISES!
GIVE US THE SPELLS!
A LIAR!
YEAH! WE DON'T WANT ANOTHER *ARMED REBELLION* UP AT THE *FARM!*
BUT IT'S COMING FOR DAMN *SURE* IF YOU DON'T DO *SOMETHING* PRETTY QUICK!

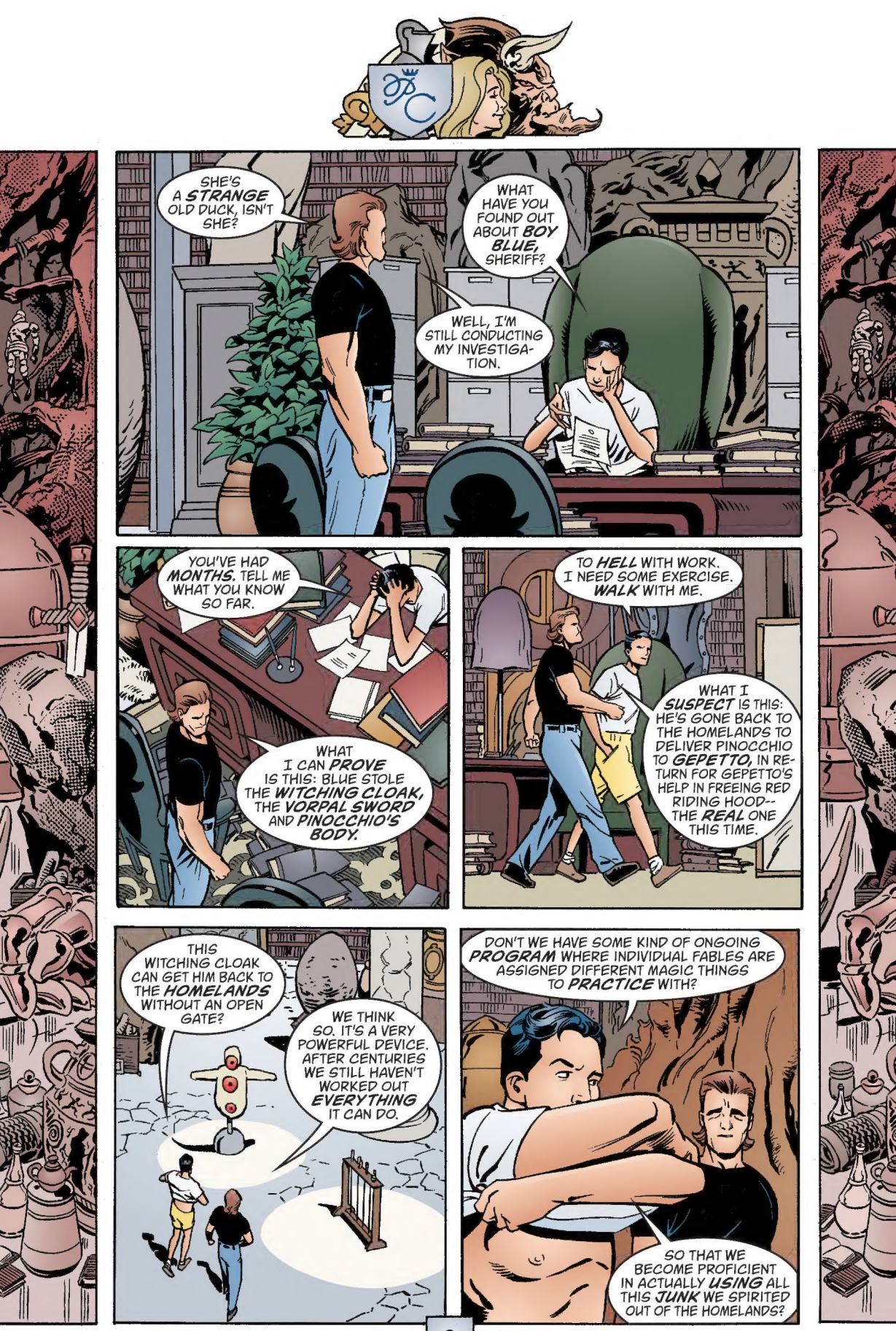
LOOK! I PERSONALLY GUARANTEE YOU'LL GET AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE MAYOR IN ANOTHER DAY OR TWO--INDIVIDUALLY, OR AS A GROUP.
BUT FOR NOW, YOU'RE IN VIOLATION OF FABLETOWN LAW.
Someday PRINCE GO!!!
KEEP YOUR PROMISES!
OUT!
WE deliver the VOTES, you deliver the SPELLS!
I ORDER YOU TO DISPERSE!
GO HOME, OR, WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE, I'LL BE FORCED TO START ARRESTING YOU!
GO ON, NOW.
THERE YOU GO.
THANK YOU.
YOU BETTER NOT LET US DOWN, SHERIFF.
YEAH, I'VE FIGURED THAT OUT.
NOM'S BOOKS
GRIM BUSINESS TO START THE DAY, EH?
DID YOU HEAR WHAT THAT FABLE CALLED ME, JOHN?
HE CALLED ME "SHERIFF!"


ME!
THEY'RE BEGINNING TO ACCEPT ME AS THE NEW SHERIFF!
ISN'T THAT JUST TOO COOL?
DISTURBANCE ALL SETTLED THEN, BOSS?
FOR NOW, GRIMBLE.
FOR NOW.
GOOD MORNING, FRAU TOTENKINDER. OFF TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE AGAIN?
YES. WALK ME THERE.
I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU.
WE'VE FINISHED THE FORENSIC EXAMINATION OF YOUR ENCHANTMENT.
AND CAN YOU ALTER IT?
WITH SOME EFFORT, YES.
SOON YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TRANSFORM AT WILL, BACK AND FORTH, BETWEEN BEAST AND HUMAN FORM--NO LONGER SUBJECT TO THE WHIMS OF YOUR BRIDE'S MERCURIAL MOOD.
MARVELOUS!

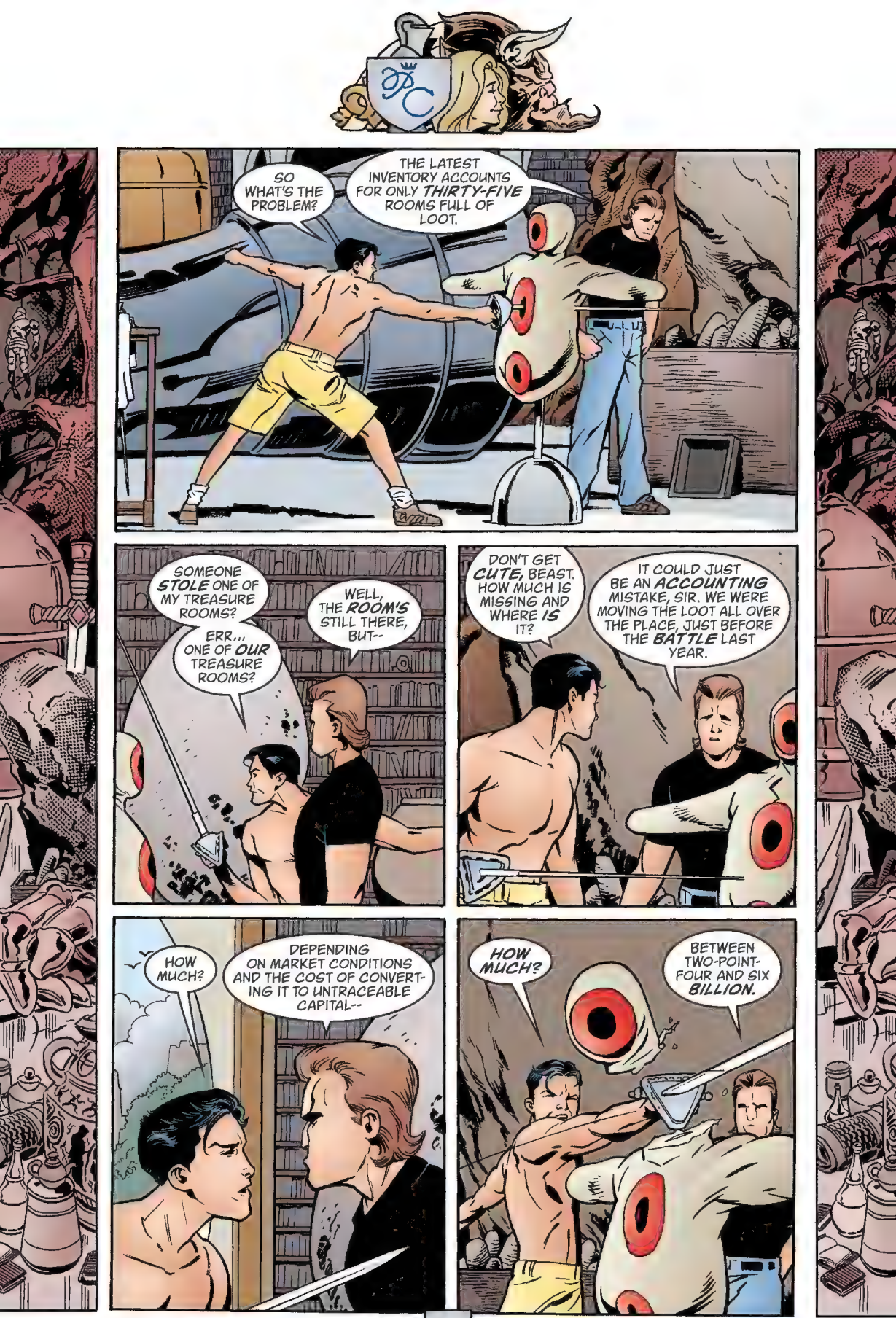
IT'LL BE QUITE A HELP IN MY NEW JOB.
LIKE BIGBY, WE NEED A TOUGH CUSTOMER FOR OUR SHERIFF--ONE WHO HAS THE OPTION OF LETTING THE MONSTER OUT WHEN A SITUATION GROWS DIRE.
NOW, WHILE I HAVE YOU ALONE, LET ME ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION--ON A SUBJECT I WANT YOU TO KEEP STRICTLY TO YOURSELF.
OH? SECRETS ALREADY?
I'M INTRIGUED.
WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR YOU TO GROW A PAIR OF EYEBALLS?
OH GOD, OH GOD, OH GOD.
I HATE THIS PLACE AND I HATE MY JOB!
HOW DID SHE DO IT?

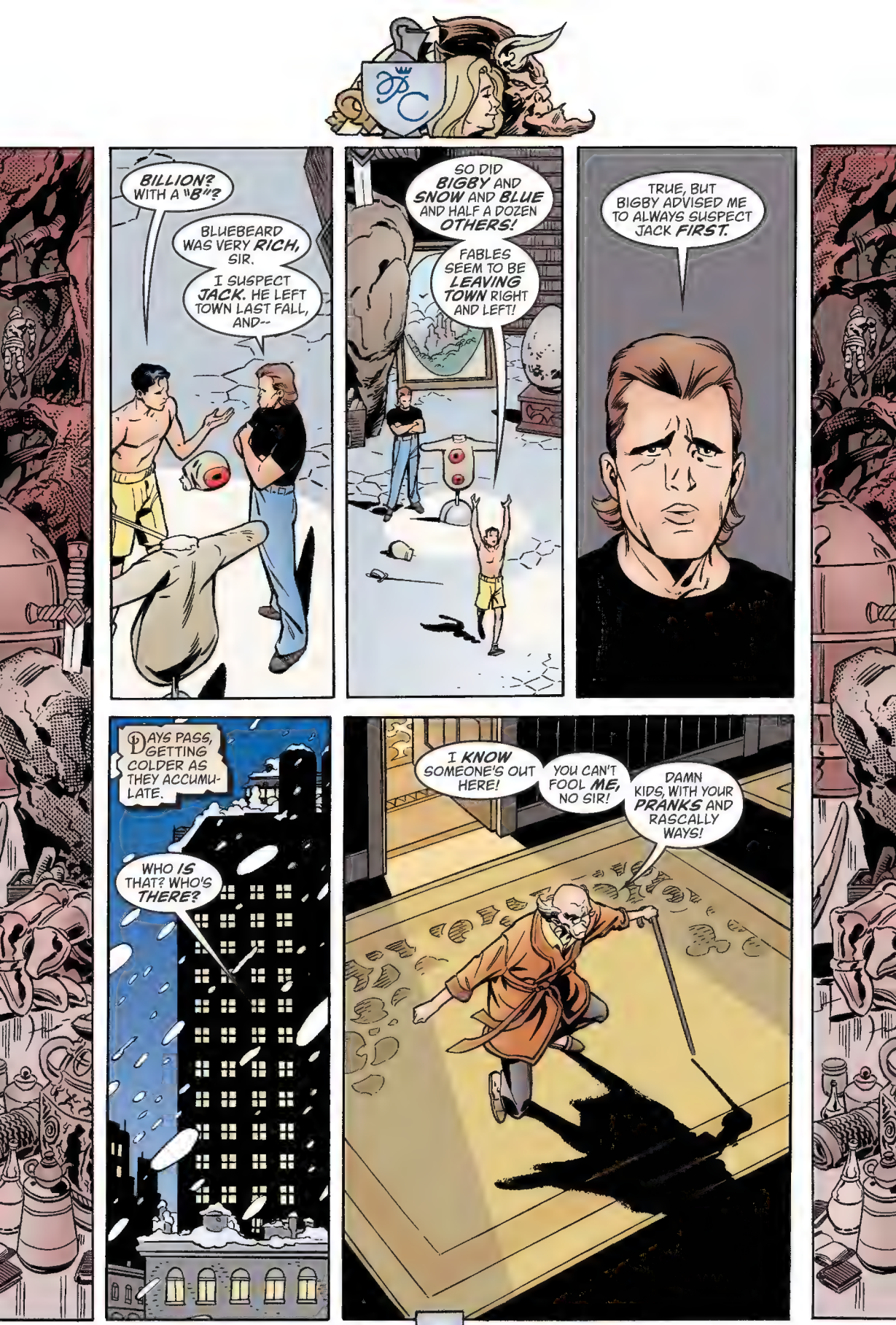

HOW DID SNOW RUN THINGS SO EFFICIENTLY AND KEEP THINGS SO TIDY?
WELL, BEAUTY--
--SHE WAS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT SINCE BEFORE FABLETOWN WAS ESTABLISHED-- BACK WHEN THEY HAD DOZENS OF PEOPLE RUNNING THIS PLACE.
SHE HAD CENTURIES TO LEARN THE ROPES, AS SHE WORKED HER WAY UP TO THE TOP POSITION.
SHOULD I STOP TALKING NOW?
GO FIND A DICTIONARY AND LOOK UP THE WORD "RHETORICAL QUESTION."
THAT'S TWO WORDS.
FLY AWAY, MONKEY!
I'M GONE!


YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO GET YOUR WORK DONE IF YOU KEEP FIGHTING WITH THAT DAMNED MONKEY EVERY DAY.
SHUT UP, MR. MAYOR. OR BETTER YET, FIRE ME FOR INSUBORDINATION.
GOD, YES, PLEASE DO THAT.
Dear Prince:
THANK YOU FOR THE ESCORT, MR. BEAST. YOU'RE A GENTLEMAN.
GOING BACK INTO THE DEPTHS AGAIN, MA'AM?
WHAT IS IT YOU FIND TO DO BACK THERE ALL DAY?
THIS AND THAT, MR. BEAST.
THIS AND THAT.


SHE'S A STRANGE OLD DUCK, ISN'T SHE?
WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT BOY BLUE, SHERIFF?
WELL, I'M STILL CONDUCTING MY INVESTIGATION.
YOU'VE HAD MONTHS. TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW SO FAR.
WHAT I CAN PROVE IS THIS: BLUE STOLE THE WITCHING CLOAK, THE VORPAL SWORD AND PINOCCHIO'S BODY.
TO HELL WITH WORK. I NEED SOME EXERCISE. WALK WITH ME.
WHAT I SUSPECT IS THIS: HE'S GONE BACK TO THE HOMELANDS TO DELIVER PINOCCHIO TO GEPETTO, IN RETURN FOR GEPETTO'S HELP IN FREEING RED RIDING HOOD--THE REAL ONE THIS TIME.
THIS WITCHING CLOAK CAN GET HIM BACK TO THE HOMELANDS WITHOUT AN OPEN GATE?
WE THINK SO. IT'S A VERY POWERFUL DEVICE. AFTER CENTURIES WE STILL HAVEN'T WORKED OUT EVERYTHING IT CAN DO.
DON'T WE HAVE SOME KIND OF ONGOING PROGRAM WHERE INDIVIDUAL FABLES ARE ASSIGNED DIFFERENT MAGIC THINGS TO PRACTICE WITH?
SO THAT WE BECOME PROFICIENT IN ACTUALLY USING ALL THIS JUNK WE SPIRITED OUT OF THE HOMELANDS?

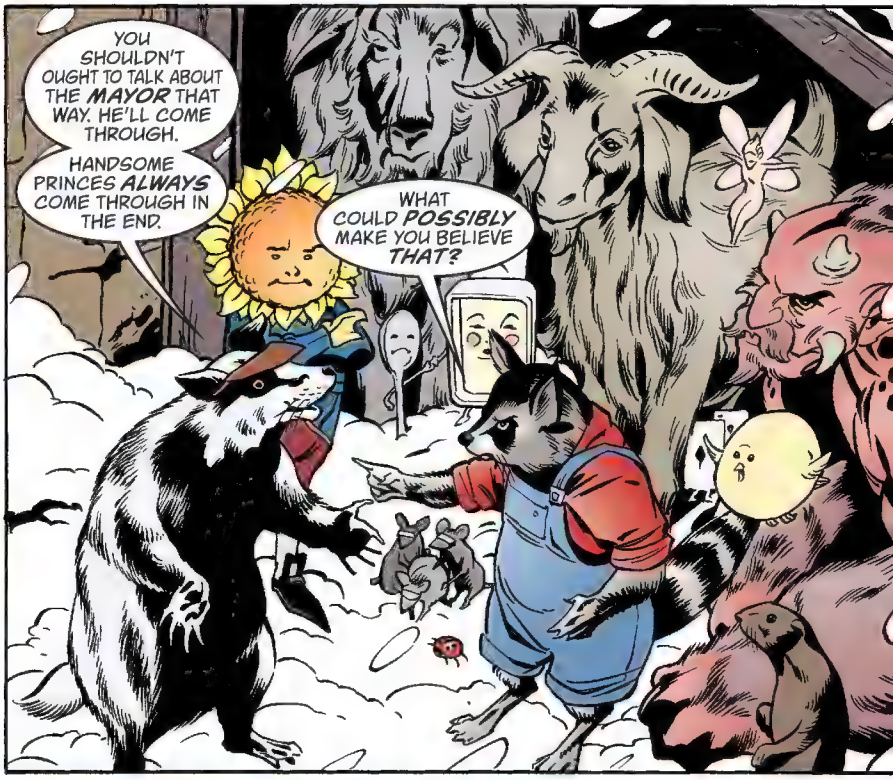
DIDN'T I READ SOMETHING LIKE THAT, IN ONE OF THOSE PILES OF CRAP I'VE BEEN WADING THROUGH?
YES, SIR. IT'S CALLED THE ARTI-FACT FAMILIARIZA-TION PROGRAM. I BELIEVE I SAW THE FILE SOMEWHERE ON YOUR DESK LAST WEEK.
FINE. SO LET'S GET WHOEVER IT IS WE ASSIGNED TO TRAIN WITH THE WITCHING CLOAK IN HERE, AND FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT IT CAN DO.
NO, WAIT. DON'T TELL ME.
IT WAS BLUE?
YES, SIR. SINCE HE SUCCESSFULLY USED THE THING TO ESCAPE THE HOMELANDS, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL HE'D BE THE ONE ASSIGNED TO EXPLORE ITS FULL CAPABILITIES.
LOVELY. JUST LOVELY.
AS LONG AS I'M PILING ON THE BAD NEWS, I'D BETTER TELL YOU ABOUT THE OTHER MATTER.
WHAT NOW? RIOTS AT THE FARM? CANNNIBALISM ABOVE THE CANDY STORE?
SO FAR WE'VE DIS-COVERED THIRTY-SIX SEPARATE TREASURE ROOMS IN BLUE-BEARD'S APART-MENT.
WITH NO INDICATION THAT WE'VE FOUND THEM ALL YET. GLORIOUS, ISN'T IT?


SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
THE LATEST INVENTORY ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY THIRTY-FIVE ROOMS FULL OF LOOT.
SOMEONE STOLE ONE OF MY TREASURE ROOMS?
ERR... ONE OF OUR TREASURE ROOMS?
WELL, THE ROOM'S STILL THERE, BUT--
DON'T GET CUTE, BEAST. HOW MUCH IS MISSING AND WHERE IS IT?
IT COULD JUST BE AN ACCOUNTING MISTAKE, SIR. WE WERE MOVING THE LOOT ALL OVER THE PLACE, JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE LAST YEAR.
HOW MUCH?
DEPENDING ON MARKET CONDITIONS AND THE COST OF CONVERTING IT TO UNTRACEABLE CAPITAL--
HOW MUCH?
BETWEEN TWO-POINT-FOUR AND SIX BILLION.


BILLION? WITH A "B"?
BLUEBEARD WAS VERY RICH, SIR.
I SUSPECT JACK. HE LEFT TOWN LAST FALL, AND--
SO DID BIGBY AND SNOW AND BLUE AND HALF A DOZEN OTHERS!
FABLES SEEM TO BE LEAVING TOWN RIGHT AND LEFT!
TRUE, BUT BIGBY ADVISED ME TO ALWAYS SUSPECT JACK FIRST.
DAYS PASS, GETTING COLDER AS THEY ACCUMULATE.
WHO IS THAT? WHO'S THERE?
I KNOW SOMEONE'S OUT HERE!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME, NO SIR!
DAMN KIDS, WITH YOUR PRANKS AND RASCALLY WAYS!

WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU--?
STOP THAT!
H-H-H-
:GASP!:
HELP! I'M--
:ACCC-CKKK!:
PLEASE-- STOP--
PLEASE-- DON'T--KILL--

WE SHOULD TAKE ONE OF THE TRUCKS AND DRIVE DOWN TO THE CITY AND DEMAND OUR TRANSFORMATIONS FROM THAT NASTY BASTARD!

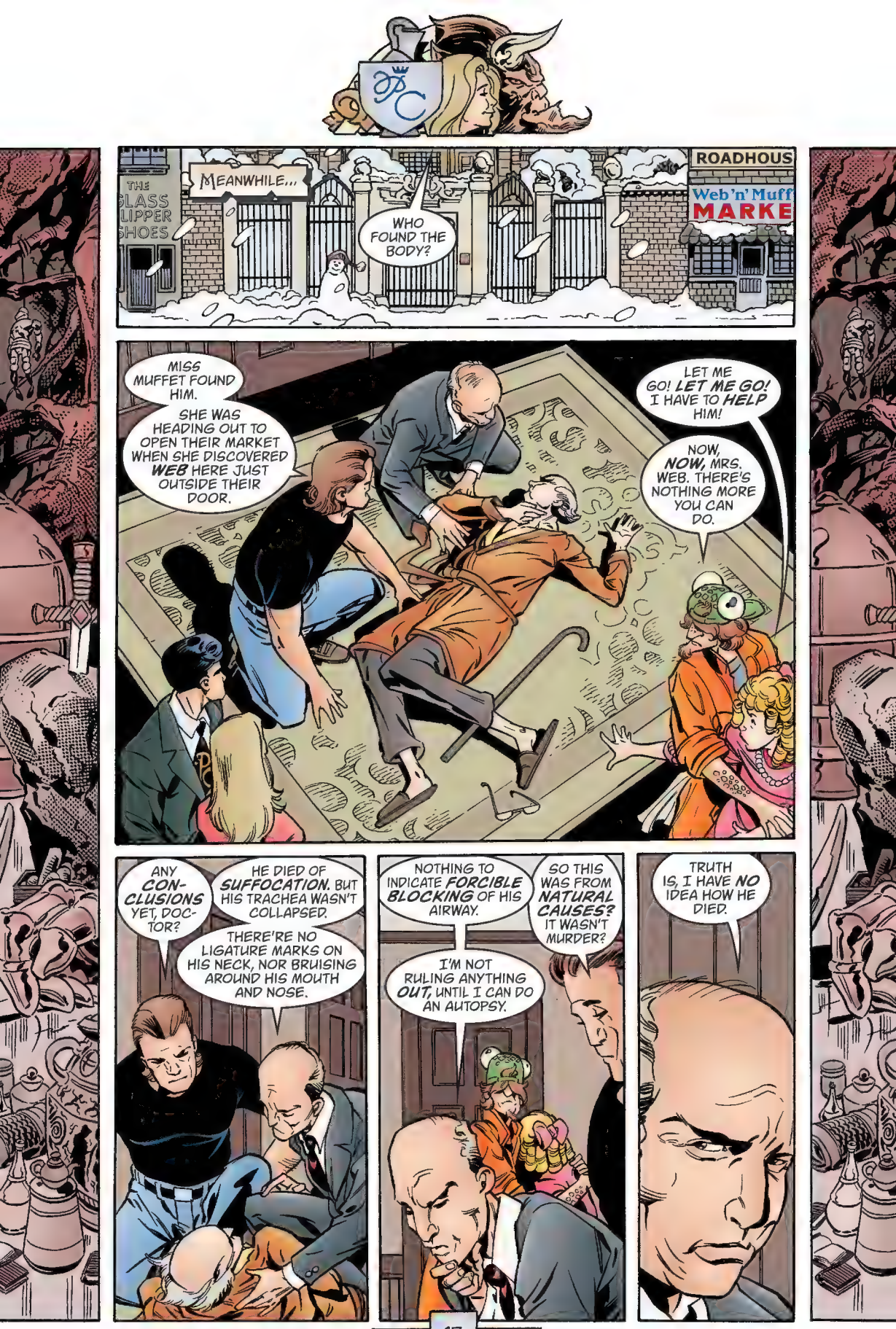

YOU SHOULDN'T OUGHT TO TALK ABOUT THE MAYOR THAT WAY. HE'LL COME THROUGH.
HANDSOME PRINCES ALWAYS COME THROUGH IN THE END.
WHAT COULD POSSIBLY MAKE YOU BELIEVE THAT?

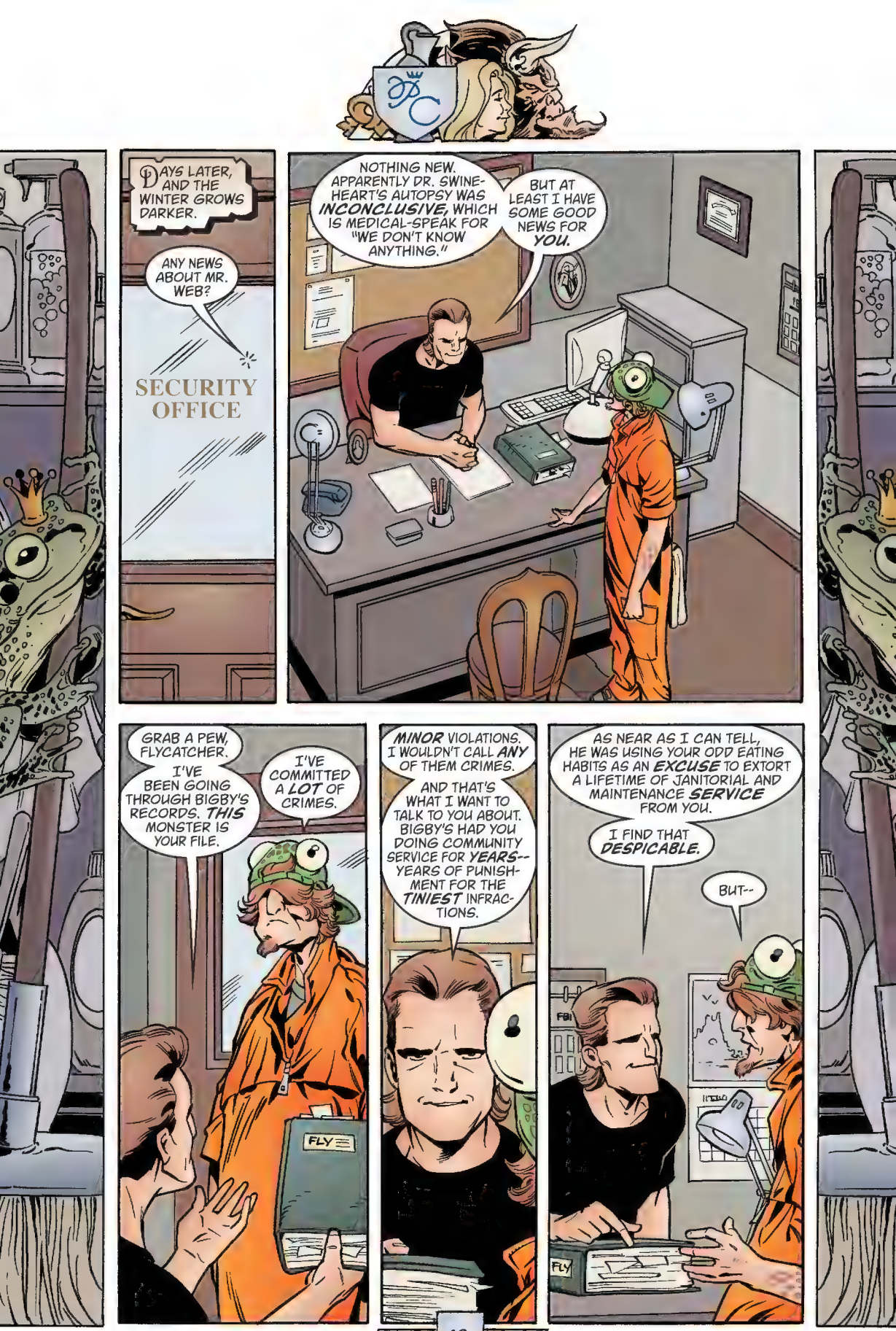
IT'S IN ALL THE STORY-BOOKS.
SHOULD I STEP IN, ROSE?
NO, IT'S JUST A HARMLESS GRIPE SESSION.

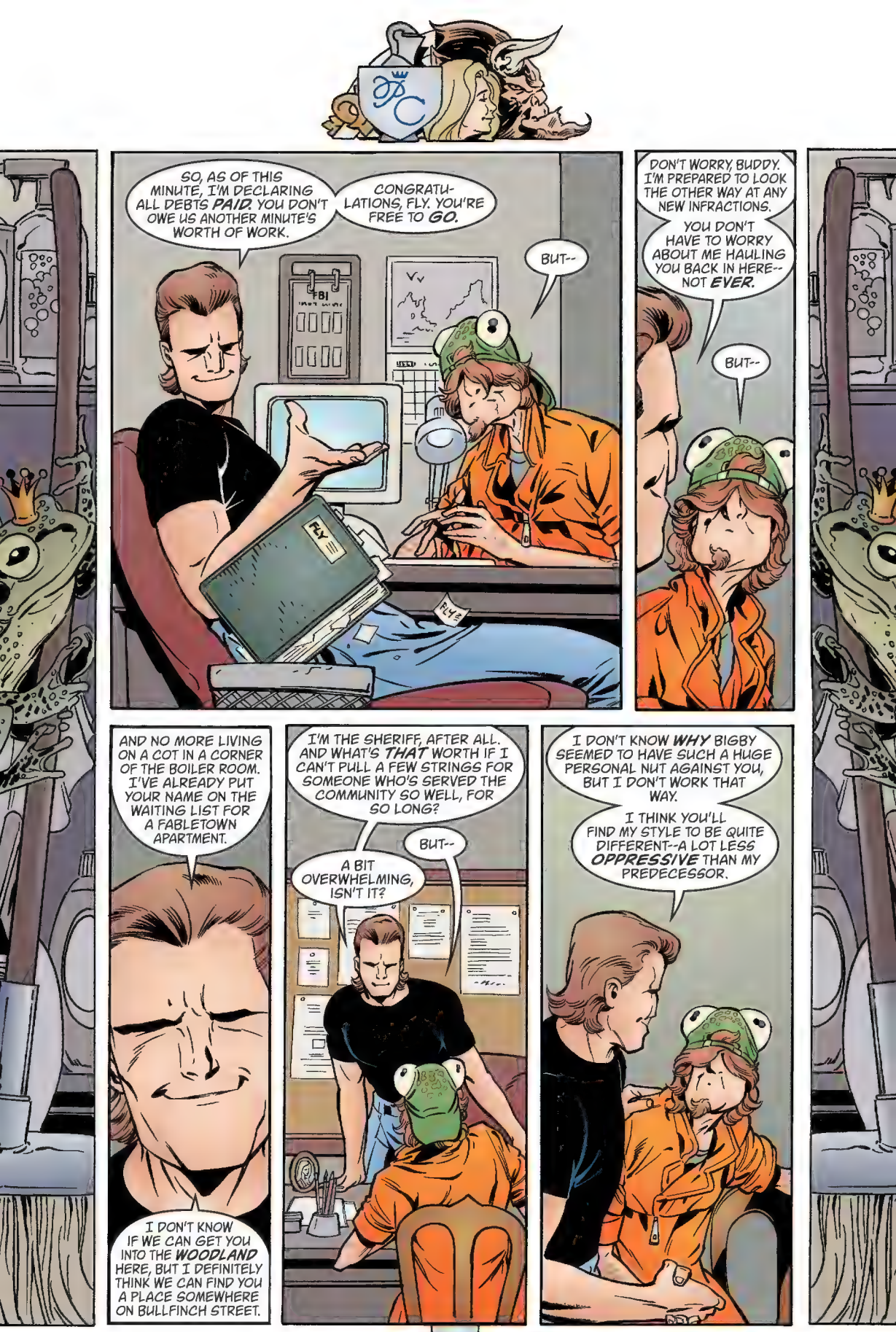
LET 'EM BLOW OFF SOME STEAM.

GOO, GOO, GA, GA! GOO, GOO, GA, GA!
SAY MAMA! SAY DADA!
SAY SHITFIRE AND DAMNATION!
STOP IT. DON'T TEACH MY KIDS BAD WORDS.
HAVEN'T THE BABIES BEEN OUT IN THE COLD A LONG TIME, SNOW?
OH, HI ROSE.
THEY DON'T SEEM TO MIND THE COLD AT ALL.
IN FACT, I DON'T REALLY NEED TO BUNDLE THEM UP SO WARM, BUT HOW WOULD I LOOK IF I DIDN'T?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CATCHING UP ON OLD MAIL.
WHY SO GLUM? MISSED YOUR CHANCE AT THE PUBLISHERS CLEARING-HOUSE SWEEPSTAKES?
LOOK AT THIS. IT'S FROM FRAU TOTEN-KINDER.

Dear Snow,
Congratulations on the birth of your fine, healthy babies. But I caution you not to automatically assume that seven children is always a lucky number.
Totenkinder
SEVEN?
BUT I HAD SIX CHILDREN.
I WONDER HOW SHE COULD GET THAT WRONG.
BECAUSE SHE'S A DOTTY OLD HAG. LIFE'S TOO SHORT TO LET SHIT LIKE THIS WORRY YOU.
COME IN AND GET SOME HOT COCOA WHILE YOUR MUNCHKINS PLAY.
DON'T LET THEM FLOAT TOO FAR, BOYS!
TEN MINUTES ONLY, AND THEN HAUL THEM STRAIGHT HOME!
I MEAN IT THIS TIME!
YOOP!
AND NONE OF THAT!
NO MORE DRAGGING THEM THROUGH THE SKY AT A MILLION MILES AN HOUR!
EVEN THOUGH THEY LOVE IT!


MEANWHILE...
THE GLASS SLIPPER SHOES
WHO FOUND THE BODY?
ROADHOUSE
Web 'n' Muff
MARKE
MISS MUFFET FOUND HIM.
SHE WAS HEADING OUT TO OPEN THEIR MARKET WHEN SHE DISCOVERED WEB HERE JUST OUTSIDE THEIR DOOR.
LET ME GO! LET ME GO! I HAVE TO HELP HIM!
NOW, NOW, MRS. WEB. THERE'S NOTHING MORE YOU CAN DO.
ANY CONCLUSIONS YET, DOCTOR?
HE DIED OF SUFFOCATION. BUT HIS TRACHEA WASN'T COLLAPSED.
THERE'RE NO LIGATURE MARKS ON HIS NECK, NOR BRUISING AROUND HIS MOUTH AND NOSE.
NOTHING TO INDICATE FORCIBLE BLOCKING OF HIS AIRWAY.
SO THIS WAS FROM NATURAL CAUSES? IT WASN'T MURDER?
I'M NOT RULING ANYTHING OUT, UNTIL I CAN DO AN AUTOPSY.
TRUTH IS, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW HE DIED.


DAYS LATER, AND THE WINTER GROWS DARKER.
ANY NEWS ABOUT MR. WEB?
SECURITY OFFICE
NOTHING NEW. APPARENTLY DR. SWINEHEART'S AUTOPSY WAS INCONCLUSIVE, WHICH IS MEDICAL-SPEAK FOR "WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING."
BUT AT LEAST I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR YOU.
GRAB A PEW, FLYCATCHER.
I'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH BIGBY'S RECORDS. THIS MONSTER IS YOUR FILE.
I'VE COMMITTED A LOT OF CRIMES.
FLY
MINOR VIOLATIONS. I WOULDN'T CALL ANY OF THEM CRIMES.
AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT. BIGBY'S HAD YOU DOING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR YEARS--YEARS OF PUNISHMENT FOR THE TINIEST INFRACTIONS.
AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, HE WAS USING YOUR ODD EATING HABITS AS AN EXCUSE TO EXTORT A LIFETIME OF JANITORIAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE FROM YOU.
I FIND THAT DESPICABLE.
BUT--
FBI
FLY


SO, AS OF THIS MINUTE, I'M DECLARING ALL DEBTS PAID. YOU DON'T OWE US ANOTHER MINUTE'S WORTH OF WORK.
CONGRATULATIONS, FLY. YOU'RE FREE TO GO.
BUT--
FBI
FLY
DON'T WORRY, BUDDY. I'M PREPARED TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY AT ANY NEW INFRACTIONS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME HAULING YOU BACK IN HERE--NOT EVER.
BUT--
AND NO MORE LIVING ON A COT IN A CORNER OF THE BOILER ROOM. I'VE ALREADY PUT YOUR NAME ON THE WAITING LIST FOR A FABLETOWN APARTMENT.
I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN GET YOU INTO THE WOODLAND HERE, BUT I DEFINITELY THINK WE CAN FIND YOU A PLACE SOMEWHERE ON BULLFINCH STREET.
I'M THE SHERIFF, AFTER ALL. AND WHAT'S THAT WORTH IF I CAN'T PULL A FEW STRINGS FOR SOMEONE WHO'S SERVED THE COMMUNITY SO WELL, FOR SO LONG?
BUT--
A BIT OVERWHELMING, ISN'T IT?
I DON'T KNOW WHY BIGBY SEEMED TO HAVE SUCH A HUGE PERSONAL NUT AGAINST YOU, BUT I DON'T WORK THAT WAY.
I THINK YOU'LL FIND MY STYLE TO BE QUITE DIFFERENT--A LOT LESS OPPRESSIVE THAN MY PREDECESSOR.

I'LL BET YOU'LL BE GLAD TO FINALLY GET OUT OF THAT ORANGE JUMPSUIT, EH, BIG GUY?
AND CHECK BACK IN WITH ME IN A FEW DAYS TO LET ME KNOW HOW YOU'RE DOING.
THAT'S NOT AN ORDER. IT'S AN INVITATION.
AND HEY, BUDDY, DON'T OVERDO THE CELEBRATING TONIGHT. I'D HATE TO START YOUR NEW EMANCIPATION BY HAVING TO HAUL YOU IN FOR PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS.
JUST KIDDING, FLY. YOU ENJOY YOUR LIBERATION.
...HOMELESS...
H'LO, FLY? HOW'S IT HANGING?
...I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO...
SO MUCH FREE TIME YOU CAN'T DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH IT? I ENVY YOU, MAN.

MISS WHITE! MISS RED!
COME QUICK!
WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON OUT HERE?
QUIET! I JUST PUT THE KIDS DOWN!
SOMEONE'S COME!
STRANGERS!
AN INVASION!
CLARA, WATCH THE BABIES!
GUARD THEM!
WHAT NOW?
ISN'T ONE DAMNED THING, IT'S ANOTHER!
GREETINGS, FABLES IN EXILE.

CALL ME MISTER NORTH.
I'M BIGBY WOLF'S FATHER.
NOW, I'D LIKE TO SEE MY GRAND-CHILDREN.
NEXT: SPRINGTIME IS FOR CORPSES

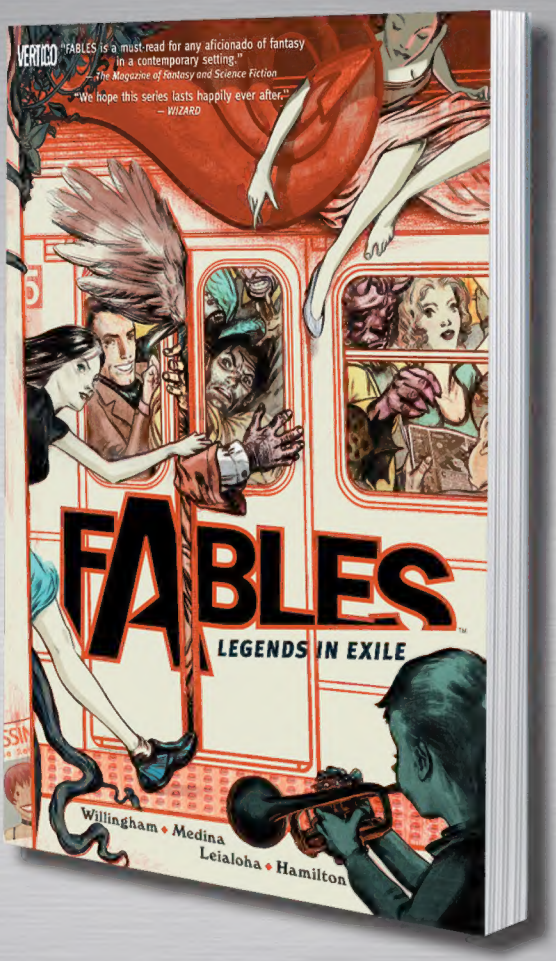
"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

BILL WILLINGHAM

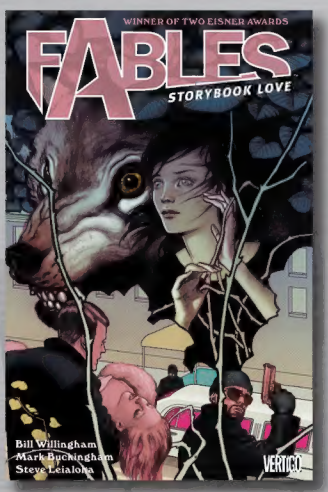
"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."
–THE WASHINGTON POST

WINNER OF EISNER AWARDS

VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE
VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
VOL. 8: WOLVES
VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL

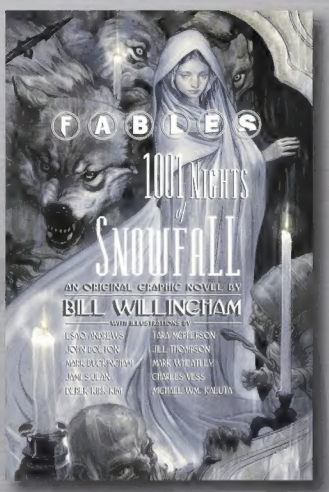

VERTIGO
"FABLES is a must-read for any aficionado of fantasy in a contemporary setting."
–The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction
"We hope this series lasts happily ever after."
– WIZARD
FABLES
LEGENDS IN EXILE
Willingham • Medina
Leialoha • Hamilton

FABLES VOL. 3:
STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:
HOMELANDS

FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES**!

Suggested for Mature Readers

NAHGA